

THE DROPOUT PROBLEM AND ITS RELATIONSHIP
TO THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

by

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B. S., Kansas State University, 1959

A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree


MASTER OF SCIENCE

College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1966

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The writer wishes to acknowledge with gratitude the advice and encouragement given by Dr. Harlan Trennepohl of the College of Education in the preparation of this report.

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INTRODUCTION

Four out of ten children in the United States failed to complete a high school education.¹ Every year some one million boys and girls have turned their backs on one of the greatest advantages offered to young persons--twelve years of free schooling. The education provided, indeed insisted upon, up to the age of sixteen in most states, has proved invaluable to boys and girls, and indirectly to their parents. Through education the foundations of information and skills have been acquired. These foundations of information and skills have been needed to get along as a human being and as a worker in our world. Mere living, let alone holding a job in business, industry, or agriculture, has demanded the ability to deal with many complicated processes and relationships.

Since automation has taken over in factories and offices, there have remained fewer jobs for unskilled workers and more unfilled jobs demanding higher levels of education. In most urban high schools the principal form of vocational training was the commercial course. The large number of clerks who used to sort and tally checks in banks has already been decimated by electronic devices;

¹Helen B. Shaffer, "School Dropouts," Editorial Research Reports, I (May, 1962), 365.

bookkeeping machines have proved to be faster and more accurate than bookkeepers. A generation ago, youths could still get jobs clerking in local stores. The rapid growth of self-service supermarkets and vending machines has reduced the demand for salesgirls behind counters and delivery boys in the grocery stores or meat markets. Very soon, a system of punch cards may replace the checkout cashiers. A further technical advance has promised tremendous impact on clerical jobs. This has been the use of machines to transcribe directly from speech. Out may go an enormous number of typists and stenographers and other office employees.

No one who had been working on or concerned with this particular problem thought that school dropout was a new phenomenon. It was the particular conformity, the necessary style of our incessantly modern life that had made an individual's dropping out of school, in our day, in our decade, a momentous tragic social event. Dropping out indicated a youngster's unwillingness or incapacity to absorb society's more refined tools and knowledge.²

In this light, the large number of dropouts was especially significant. These unaspiring workers were not

²Daniel Schreiber, Guidance and the School Dropout (Washington, D.C.: National Educational Association, 1964), p. 1.

unemployed because they were high school dropouts. It was because the kinds of jobs for which their preparation qualified them were fast disappearing--due to the impact of automation and technological advancements.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It was the purpose of this report to determine, through a study of available literature: (1) the major causes of dropouts; (2) what high school counselors and teachers have done to help alleviate the dropout problem; and (3) what may be done at the elementary level to motivate and encourage the boys and girls to remain in school.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

A dropout was a pupil who left school for any reason except death, before graduation or completion of a program of studies and without transferring to another school.

Voluntary dropouts are those over which school administrators can exercise a certain amount of control.

Involuntary dropouts are those over which school administrators have no control, including such reasons as physical disability, deceased, drafted, etc.

A dropout problem, as stated by John H. Rohrer, was one of the young adolescents characterized as follows:

one who has grown to mistrust other individuals; one who has had no significant adult figure to offer him emotional support; one who has been inculcated with the most primitive kinds of social values; one who has had to turn to peer groups in order to find someone to relate to emotionally; one who has developed feelings of isolation; one who because of frustrations strikes back at the perceived sources of frustration. . . .³

The holding power of a school or school system was indicated by the proportion of its pupils who do not drop out of school.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The method of procedure used in this study was as follows:

1. A review of the pertinent literature contained in the Kansas State University library was executed.

2. Letters were sent to each of the State Departments of Education requesting information on dropouts. Many of the State Departments responded by sending out the latest studies that had been made.

IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL DROPOUTS

Early identification of potential dropouts has been one of the least considered facets in education, but many researchers believed it to have the most potential in

³Daniel Schreiber, The School Dropout (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1964), p. 73.

combating the early school-leaving problem.

Characteristics of the potential dropout have been identified in many studies and have been categorized in numerous ways. Practically every study of dropout characteristics has stressed the interrelatedness and complexity of the numerous factors which cause dropouts. It is still a moot question as to which combinations of factors seem most likely to produce the pupil-school break, and further study is needed to determine which syndrome of symptoms is the most destructive to school holding power.

One study, prepared by the Michigan State Curriculum Committee on School Holding Power, listed twenty factors which characterized potential dropouts. The study added that many characteristics of potential dropouts may be observed in elementary school pupils. The list was as follows:⁴

1. Consistent failure to achieve in regular school work
2. Grade level placement two or more years below average age for grade
3. Irregular attendance and frequent tardiness
4. Active antagonism to teachers and principals
5. Marked disinterest in school, with feeling of "not belonging"
6. Low scholastic aptitude
7. Low reading ability
8. Frequent changes of schools

⁴Michigan Department of Public Instruction, State Curriculum on Holding Power. "Quickie Kit" on School Holding Power. Publication No. 507. (Lansing: the Department, 1963), p. 17.

9. Non-acceptance by school staff
10. Non-acceptance by schoolmates
11. Friends much younger or older
12. Unhappy family situation
13. Marked difference from schoolmates, in size interests, physique, social class, nationality, dress, or personality development
14. Inability to afford the normal expenditures of schoolmates
15. Non-participation in extracurricular activities
16. Inability to compete with, or ashamed of, brothers and sisters
17. Performance consistently below potential
18. Serious physical or emotional handicap
19. Being a discipline case
20. Record of delinquency

Research has shown that the potential dropout can be identified. Eighty per cent of all dropouts are behind at least one grade in school.⁵ The dropout has usually been retarded two or more years in reading ability. He has received lower grades in the elementary years, and the average course marks of the dropouts went down each year during the eighth, ninth, and tenth years of school. In Iowa 84 per cent of the male dropouts and 80 per cent of the males who would graduate were successfully predicted by considering intelligence, achievement test results, grade point average, number of extracurricular areas participated in, and the educational attainment of

⁵Pennsylvania Department of Public Instruction. Dropouts: America's Education Wasteland. (Harrisburg: the Department, 1964), p. 1.

the parents. In this study,⁶ 81 per cent of the female dropouts and 79 per cent of the female graduates were identified by use of grade point average, per cent of time absent, and participation in extracurricular activities.

Most researchers have agreed that the role of the elementary school in early identification of potential dropouts was paramount. Many pupils have become psychological dropouts long before they entered the secondary schools. Many of the forces that have contributed to the withdrawal of students in the secondary grades have been first felt during the elementary school years. It was evident from what the studies have shown that greater efforts must be made at the elementary levels if any progress in combating the school dropout problem can be made.

Perhaps the best known of all programs to awaken interest in education among potential dropouts from socially deprived homes was New York City's "Higher Horizons" program.⁷ The genesis of this program was a demonstration guidance project launched in September, 1956,

⁶Iowa Department of Public Instruction. Dropouts. (Des Moines: the Department, 1964), p. 11.

⁷John W. Porter, "The Heart of the Dropout Problem: Early Identification," Michigan Education Journal, XL (January, 1963), 362.

in a junior high school where 60 per cent of the students quit before graduating and only 4 per cent went on to college. An effort was made to identify students with apparently low I.Q.'s whose natural gifts were obscured by destructive early experiences. Two-thirds of the members of the first project class remained in school until they received diplomas and one-third continued their education after graduation.

Detroit's Great Cities Program, designed to improve the aspiration level of people in culturally deprived areas, has been using methods and forms for the identification of potential dropouts prepared by the Michigan Committee on School Holding Power.⁸ Although many of these new programs have been directed at grades seven through ten, where the attrition rates have been the highest, it was generally recognized that to cut the dropout rate appreciably, a concentrated effort must be exerted from the day the child first enters school.

Some of the newer programs in other places have been introduced in elementary schools. New York City's elementary school division started an experimental program in thirty-seven schools in September, 1959, to identify potential dropouts at an early age and provide them with

⁸Ibid., p. 362.

special services. The program has centered on kindergarten through third grade, with follow-up services beyond for students who still needed help. A major objective has been to discover the talents of individual children and to offer activities that will encourage their development.

Flint, Michigan, has started a personalized curriculum program.⁹ About five hundred fifty potential and actual dropouts have been identified in the junior and senior high schools. At the ratio of fifteen students to one teacher these youngsters work one-half day with the same teacher on basic skills of reading, writing, speech, arithmetic, science, and basic social studies. During the half-day session they may take field trips and engage in other activities of their special interests and needs. As a part of this half-day program they will receive some vocational counseling, learn how to apply for a job, get tips on grooming and good manners, and work on many other aspects of securing a higher degree of personal and social competence.

During the other half day the pupils have scheduled courses which fit their individual interests and needs and in which they will have a good chance to succeed. Emphasis in this part of the program was on developing some skills

⁹Harriet T. Letimer, "Flint Takes First Steps to Combat its Dropout Problem," Michigan School Board Journal, L (January, 1964), 10.

which enabled them to obtain and hold a job.

In 1963, the Board of Education in Vicksburg, Michigan, adopted a four-year "Practical Training Program" which was designed to better meet the needs of the low-achiever and potential dropout.¹⁰ This program was built around the philosophy that all students should and do desire to follow the same required courses of study as their classmates, but that the material covered in these courses must be designed to meet each individual's basic needs. The subject matter presented developed pertinent concepts, habits, attitudes, and skills from a remedial standpoint. At the junior year, there was a deviation from the curriculum as it applied to other students. A youngster in the Practical Training Program had two hours of work experience within the school system at this level. During the senior year, he was scheduled into three hours of work within the community. For each of these experiences, he received credit toward graduation. Several observations were made of the youth in this program which seemed important. (1) The potential dropout showed a marked degree of improvement when he was assigned to work with a skillful and understanding teacher whom he felt was interested in his individual problems. (2) With a

¹⁰Ibid., p. 11.

carefully designed work-study program, the students did not object to being grouped. (3) Potential school leavers must be identified early if they are to be helped.

DROPOUT RATE

A United States Office of Education comparative study by states of ninth graders in 1959-60 compared with the number of high school graduates four years later, based on pupil membership, showed that California led the nation with a 87.5 per cent holding power through four years of high school. Kansas was fourth with a holding power of 84.5 per cent. The average holding power for the fifty states was 72.7 per cent. The lowest state was Georgia with 56.8 per cent.¹¹

REASONS GIVEN FOR STUDENTS DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL

Many kinds of studies have been made on the assumption that the number of dropouts could be greatly reduced if it were once learned why boys and girls left school before they graduated from high school. Private organizations and individuals, state departments of education, city school systems, professional educational

¹¹South Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Dropouts in South Carolina Schools (Columbia: the Department, 1964), p. 13.

organizations, the United State Office of Education, and the United States Department of Labor have collected a mass of information about school dropouts.

These studies have usually combined data from several of the following sources: (a) teacher opinion about the dropout; (b) opinions of the dropouts themselves; (c) comparisons of dropouts with pupils who finished with respect to intelligence, sex, age, average marks, socioeconomic status of the family, race, and health; (d) examination of evidence in the cumulative school record of the dropout; and (e) personal interviews with the dropouts and their families.

However, youth who have dropped out of school have not readily supplied information. Many of them gave vague and meaningless reasons for leaving school or became voluble about some incident which was important only because it was the last in a series of dissatisfactions. On questionnaires where they were asked to check reasons for leaving school, dropouts naturally tended to check those items which would show themselves in the best light. In many cases the dropout was probably unaware of the fundamental reasons for his decision.

The reasons given for students dropping out of school varied from state to state. In Hawaii, "truancy" (26.8 per cent) was the major reason for dropping out of school. This was followed by "disinterest, not gaining

much from school" (22.2 per cent), "work" (11.7 per cent) and "non-attendance, reason not known" (11.1 per cent).

In Vermont, "academic difficulty and/or lack of interest" accounted for 35 per cent of the dropouts. The other reasons given were "accepted or seeking employment" and "marriage".

In the state of Louisiana the reasons given in order of significance were "lack of parental support and encouragement", "academic retardation", and "marriage". "Poor health" and "inadequate curriculum" were also listed as reasons.¹²

A study conducted in Kentucky gave "lack of interest", "marriage", "lack of scholastic success", and "parental indifference" as the four main reasons for students dropping out of school.

In a Connecticut study the reasons for leaving were analyzed as follows:¹³ 39 per cent preferred to leave school, although they had adequate ability to complete high school; 38 per cent decided to leave (mostly for employment) and were judged to have a level of academic ability such that they would find it

¹²Louisiana Department of Public Instruction. The School Dropout in Louisiana. (Baton Rouge: the Department, 1965), p. 22.

¹³Robert W. Stoughton, Early School Leavers in Connecticut. (Hartford: the Department, 1963), p. 10.

difficult to complete the scholastic work of high school; 7 per cent found it necessary to leave because of illness or financial necessity; 8 per cent left for disciplinary reasons; 8 per cent left because of marriage or pregnancy.

A study conducted in Utah listed the following reasons for students withdrawing from school:¹⁴ marriage and/or pregnancy, unwillingness to obey rules and regulations of the school, consistent failure to achieve in regular school work, and general dislike of school.

Dropouts most often gave two reasons for leaving school: financial need and dislike of school. Financial need included anything from contributing to the support of the family to buying a hot-rod. Dislike for school was nearly as inclusive. The dropout stated that he disliked school because he was discouraged over his academic progress or disliked a certain teacher or subject; he probably meant that he saw no practical value in the subjects he was studying or that he felt excluded from the social life of the school.

Investigators have not agreed as to the importance of intelligence as a factor in dropping out of school.

¹⁴Utah Department of Public Instruction. Utah State Dropout. (Salt Lake City: the Department, 1963), p. 33.

Some studies have found that intelligence was not particularly important, while others showed that low scholastic aptitude was one of the characteristics of the potential dropout.

A study conducted in Maryland showed 50.2 per cent below average in mental ability, 43.4 per cent average, and 6.4 per cent were above average. In Louisiana, the number of superior, high average, and average students who left school was slightly less than the number of dropouts who were reported as being below average, borderline, and retarded.¹⁵ This would seem to indicate that, while many students of low ability are dropping out, there should also be concern for those who can satisfactorily achieve but who nevertheless terminate their education prior to high-school graduation.

A study in Connecticut showed 36.2 per cent of the dropouts had I.Q.'s below ninety, 30.7 per cent ranged from ninety to ninety-nine, 22.2 per cent from one hundred to one hundred nine, while 10.9 per cent of the dropouts had I.Q.'s that ranged from one hundred ten and above.¹⁶

The United States Department of Labor study of dropouts in seven communities found that three times as

¹⁵The School Dropout in Louisiana, op. cit., p. 12.

¹⁶Stoughton, op. cit., p. 6.

many dropouts as high-school graduates had I.Q.'s under eighty-five, and that nearly three times as many graduates as dropouts had I.Q.'s of one hundred ten and over.

Due to his language disabilities, the dropout's level of reading achievement was significantly lower than that of the nonleaver. One study showed a relationship between reading ability and withdrawal from high school; three times as many poor readers as good readers dropped out of school, and the likelihood of a poor reader's dropping out was greater when other factors pressuring a student toward withdrawal were present. Disabilities in reading can have serious repercussions. Pupils who do not read well enough for the work of their grade or subject are likely to fail, and failure produces discouragement.

Failure in school seemed to be closely related to dropping out. Dropouts have often been grade repeaters; they failed early, most often in the first, third, and fourth grades, and showed a general decline in scholarship from the elementary to the senior high school. In Louisiana, during the year 1962-1963, at least two-thirds of all dropouts were retarded one or more years. A Kentucky study showed that most of the dropouts had been retained in the first, second, seventh, eighth, and ninth grades. In Virginia, about one-half of the dropouts had not been retained in grades one through seven. Negro

dropouts did not appear to have experienced retentions prior to grade eight to as high a degree as white dropouts.

Wolfbein, in a study of ten thousand dropouts, found that 85 per cent of them were behind their age group by at least one year, and 53 per cent were behind two years.¹⁷

Recognizing that academic retardation is a definite factor which causes students to drop out of school, educators are urged to take whatever remedial steps seem necessary and applicable to see that retardation does not become repetitious when preventive measures can be used.

Some dropouts, when questioned about their reasons for leaving school, stated only that they disliked a certain teacher, but others were able to define their grievances specifically. In a California study of dropouts, pupils complained that lessons were insufficiently explained and that they did not get enough individual help from the teacher. Some of them were honest enough to say that they could have gotten more help, but they were afraid to ask for it. What they wanted most was more personal contact with the teacher. They mentioned often that teachers were not consistent in disciplinary

¹⁷Seymour L. Wolfbein, "Transition from School to Work: A Study of the School Leaver," Personnel and Guidance Journal XXXVIII (October, 1959), p. 100.

practices, that they were lax and strict without reason, or that the whole class was sometimes punished for the misdeeds of one or two members.

Dropouts, according to the California report, were much more dissatisfied with their social relationships in school when compared with the nonleavers. They all considered themselves poorly treated by teachers and pupils alike, but the girls were especially sensitive to snubs, to the lack of the "right" clothes, and to rejection by an established clique.

Researchers have also found that dropouts do not take part in extracurricular activities. Usually dropouts are "loners"; they have little or no contact with their peers and less with their teachers. Most educators felt that participation by students in the activities provided by the school, both in class and in the activities outside the regular school day program, contributed to the potential dropout's feeling of being an integral part of the school.

Participation in school activities gives the youth a role, a conversation piece, an identification, a support for his academic orientation, a feeling of kinship with the administration and their goals, a sense of accomplishment,

a chance for self-development and recognition.¹⁸

In Louisiana, during the school year 1962-1963, only three hundred fifteen, or 1.94 per cent, of the 16,221 students who left school were found to have participated in many of the school activities.¹⁹ Over half of the dropouts did not take part in any extracurricular activities.

In the state of Washington, dropouts participated less than the total stayins in the following activities:²⁰ dramatics, music, art, science, clubs, student government, and school service. There was no difference between the groups in amount of time spent on sports activities.

A study conducted in Utah indicated that 70 per cent of the urban dropouts rarely, if ever, participated in extracurricular activities.²¹ Twenty-one per cent participated sometimes and only 6 per cent participated frequently. Twenty per cent were reported to have been enrolled in two or more school activities, and 24 per cent had been enrolled in just one activity. Likewise, two-thirds of the rural dropouts rarely, if ever, participated

¹⁸Lucius F. Cervantes, The Dropout. (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1965), p. 103.

¹⁹Stoughton, op. cit., p. 16.

²⁰Washington Department of Public Instruction. Why School Dropouts. (Olympia: the Department, 1963), p. 64.

²¹Utah State Dropout, op. cit., p. 25.

in extracurricular activities. Twenty-seven per cent were reported as participating in school activities occasionally; and 10 per cent as participating frequently. Twenty-two per cent participated in two or more school activities, and 33 per cent in only one type of school activity. Males of the total group did not participate in school activities as much as did females of the total group.

Student activity groups confer prestige on their members and offer opportunity for leadership. They are more likely to be organized around student interest than is the classroom work. When activity increases or grades improve, so does interest in the whole school program.

Some studies have shown that there was a direct correlation between the educational attainment of parents and the level to which their children attain. In Louisiana, the largest number of dropouts occurred where one or both parents had less than a high school education.

Some investigators have noted that frequent change of school has contributed to students dropping out. Bledsoe found that while 9.2 per cent of the students enrolled continuously in one elementary school dropped out, 35.3 per cent of those who had been enrolled in two or

more elementary schools dropped out.²²

In Utah a very high per cent of the dropouts in each grade had experienced at least one transfer to a different school and a majority reportedly had transferred from two to five times.²³ Among the seventh grade dropouts, 14.2 per cent had transferred to different schools eight or more times. In the eighth grade 15.8 per cent and in the ninth grade 12 per cent of the dropouts had transferred to different schools six or more times. In the tenth grade, 6.2 per cent; in the eleventh grade 8.8 per cent; and in the twelfth grade 5.6 per cent of the dropouts had transferred to different schools six or more times.

A study done by the Los Angeles City School Districts found that graduates had been enrolled in Los Angeles City Schools approximately four years longer than had dropouts. It also found that, on the average, graduates had spent 87 per cent of their school years in Los Angeles City Schools while dropouts had spent 60 per cent; and more than one-half of the dropouts had been enrolled for less than one year in the schools from which they dropped out.

²²Joseph C. Bledsoe, "An Investigation of Six Correlates of Student Withdrawal from High School," LIII (September, 1959), p. 4.

²³Utah State Dropout, op. cit., p. 18.

ATTENDANCE

Research showed that poor or irregular attendance was one of the prime reasons for the school dropout problem. The child who was repeatedly absent from his classes was handicapped in his studies and, as a result, became discouraged, bored, and uninterested. It then became much easier for him to make a decision to leave school to avoid this unpleasantness.

In Louisiana, of the total 16,807 student dropouts, over 7,000 were guilty of being excessively absent (absent twenty or more days).²⁴

In Utah, approximately 19 per cent of the dropouts attended school less than 60 per cent of the time, while 45 per cent attended less than 80 per cent of the time.²⁵

In Indiana, 44 per cent of the dropouts attended school irregularly, while 24 per cent of the withdrawals attended regularly.²⁶

In the state of Washington, the average number of days absent from school for dropouts was twelve days out of one hundred eighty; total stayins missed approximately six

²⁴The School Dropout in Louisiana, op. cit., p. 21.

²⁵Utah State Dropout, op. cit., p. 18.

²⁶Indiana Department of Public Instruction. The Hoosier Schoolmaster of the Sixties. (Indianapolis: the Department, 1963), p. 21.

days.²⁷ Greater absence from school was associated with lower achievement, lower self-estimate of academic grades, fewer activities participated in, lower attitudes toward school, lower socioeconomic level of the home, more hours of work per week, a greater number of schools attended, and more personal problems.

PARENTAL ATTITUDE TOWARD SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

The degree to which parents have encouraged or required school attendance has had an important influence upon high school completion. In Virginia fewer than half of the parents of dropouts were reported to have been favorable to continued school attendance by the dropouts. The pattern of parental attitude showed slightly higher proportions of parents of girl dropouts supporting continued school attendance than was noted for the boys. Parents of Negro dropouts indicated support for school attendance in higher proportions than was observed for white dropouts. The proportion of parents favoring school attendance dropped sharply between the dropouts having average and dropouts having low potential for school success. It appeared that many parents had adopted a point of view that the secondary school had very little to offer

²⁷Washington Department of Public Instruction. Why School Dropouts. (Olympia: the Department, 1963), p. 34.

pupils with below average ability.

In Utah 66 per cent of the parents of dropouts had a positive attitude toward the school.²⁸ The attitudes of parents became better toward the school the higher the grade of the dropout. In grade seven, only 36 per cent of the parents of the dropouts had a favorable attitude toward the school. These same favorable feelings toward the school existed with only 39 per cent of the parents of eighth grade dropouts, 56 per cent of parents of ninth grade dropouts, 59 per cent of parents of tenth grade dropouts, 72 per cent of the parents of eleventh grade dropouts, and 80 per cent of the parents of twelfth grade dropouts.

Schreiber stated that two-thirds of the dropouts' parents had either a negative or an indifferent attitude toward school, whereas almost 100 per cent of the parents of stayins felt that a young person would be seriously handicapped if he did not possess a high school education.²⁹

²⁸Utah State Dropout, op. cit., p. 30.

²⁹Daniel Schreiber, "The School Dropout--Fugitive from Failure," Bulletin of National Association of Secondary-School Principals, XXV (June, 1962), p. 177.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

The social and economic status of the family was a significant factor in some of the dropout studies. Bowman and Matthews found that 87.7 per cent of the dropouts were in the lower class, and 1.4 per cent were in the upper and upper-middle class; corresponding figures for those who stayed in school were 56.7 per cent and 11.7 per cent.³⁰

GRADE OF DROPOUTS UPON DEPARTURE

In Utah children began dropping out of school in grade seven and continued to leave school in increasing numbers through grade eleven. The per cent of dropouts from grade twelve was less than the per cent of dropouts from either grade eleven or grade ten. See Table I.³¹

Children terminated their education in Louisiana at all grade levels. The greatest number of dropouts occurred at the tenth grade level. This was true for both whites and Negroes. Broken down by sexes, more males left school in the ninth grade, whereas more females left in the tenth

³⁰Paul H. Bowman, and Charles V. Matthews. Motivations of Youth for Leaving School. Research Project Number 200. (United States Office of Education, September, 1960).

³¹Utah State Dropout, op. cit., p. 7.

grade. By race, more white males left school in the tenth grade, while more Negro males left school at the ninth grade level.³²

TABLE I
PER CENT OF SCHOOL DROPOUTS
BY GRADE IN UTAH
1963

	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Urban (N=1343)	1.0%	2.8%	9.0%	29.6%	33.5%	23.6%
Rural (N=99)	1.0%		2.0%	23.0%	50.8%	23.0%

In South Carolina, the largest per cent of students dropped out in grade ten. In 1964, 12.6 per cent of the total enrollment dropped out in grade nine, 13.1 per cent in grade ten, 10.4 per cent in grade eleven, and only 6.4 per cent in grade twelve.³³

A study in Maine showed the largest per cent of dropouts occurring in the ninth grade.³⁴ There were 27.84 per cent of the dropouts in the ninth grade, compared to

³²The School Dropout in Louisiana, op. cit., p. 7.

³³Dropouts in South Carolina Schools, op. cit., p. 12.

³⁴Maine Department of Public Instruction. Maine School Leavers. (Augusta: the Department, 1964), p. 7.

24.38 per cent in the tenth grade, 21.63 per cent in the eleventh grade, and 15.17 per cent in the twelfth grade.

It was indicated in Table II that the largest number of pupils left school in Virginia during the eighth grade. The relationship of the number of boys and girls changed with a relatively larger number of boys leaving while enrolled in the lower high school grades and a larger number of girls leaving while enrolled in the upper grades.³⁵

TABLE II
DROPOUTS BY GRADE CLASSIFICATION
SESSION 1962-1963 IN VIRGINIA

Grade	Number of Dropouts	Per Cent of Dropouts	Per Cent of Enrollment Dropping Out	Number of Boys Per Girl
8	3,502	28.16	4.40	1.8
9	2,966	23.85	4.13	1.4
10	2,781	22.37	4.31	1.2
11	2,015	16.21	4.31	1.1
12	1,170	9.41	3.09	1.0

An Iowa study showed that for boys, more dropouts occurred in the tenth grade than at any other grade level, while for girls, dropouts were most frequent in grade

³⁵William S. Graybeal. Virginia Secondary School Dropouts. XLVII (Richmond: the Department, 1964), p. 5.

eleven. Considering boys and girls together, 28.2 per cent of all dropouts occurred in the eleventh grade, 25.0 per cent in the tenth grade, 19.7 per cent in the twelfth grade, and 15.1 per cent in the ninth grade. Thus, 88.0 per cent of all dropouts in Iowa public schools for the 1963-1964 period occurred in grades nine through twelve.³⁶

The per cent of dropouts by grades in Hawaii ranged from 17 per cent in grade nine to 32 per cent to grade ten, 30 per cent in grade eleven, and 20 per cent in grade twelve.

In most of the studies the critical grades seemed to be ten and eleven. If a student reached the twelfth grade, research indicated a strong possibility that he would graduate.

WHAT SOME SCHOOLS ARE DOING TO HELP PREVENT DROPOUTS

In Iowa the Cedar Falls and Sioux City schools have emphasized activities in the elementary schools. Such programs as ungraded classes, elementary guidance staffing, reading programs, remedial classes during summer school, and ability grouping in some instructional areas have been initiated. In the secondary level the use of ability grouping has been widened, an extended program of

³⁶Iowa Department of Public Instruction. Dropouts. (Des Moines: the Department, 1964), p. 13.

vocational and technical courses has been offered, and a release time work program has been implemented.

The Polk County Board of Education in cooperation with the Des Moines Public Schools initiated an experimental study entitled "Guiding Individual Development".³⁷ Located in an extremely low socioeconomic section of Des Moines, this project attempted to study the effectiveness of a preventive approach to the dropout problem. Earlier research conducted in this area had demonstrated this was what might be termed a "dropout prone" area in Des Moines. Pupils were ranked by teachers on the criterion of probability of graduation and those who ranked lowest were selected to participate. Two experimental classes of fifteen pupils each were formed and parents' permission for their children's participation was secured. The groups, one a first grade and the other a seventh grade, were taught by the same teacher. Methodology and curriculum had been left completely for the teacher to determine. Other than urging a creative approach to the problem of increasing interest in reading and school in general, nothing had been superimposed. Early reports from this experimental program showed that absenteeism had been drastically reduced and many parents who had never before

³⁷Ibid., p. 30.

been in the school had met several times with the teachers.

In Green Bay, Wisconsin, educators strongly believed that dropping out of school did not develop overnight. The traits of indifference, lack of purpose, and failure to work hard usually exist long before a student can legally leave school. Therefore, the Green Bay junior high schools have begun a program alerting seventh graders to the practicality of their present school work in relation to their future regardless of what it might be. Under this plan, the schools called upon recognized leaders of business and industry in the community to help students see the importance of their present schooling.³⁸

Racine, Wisconsin, has begun an experimental kindergarten program to help the disadvantaged children from depressed urban areas who often experience clusters of serious educational problems at the outset of their school years.³⁹ These children have limited backgrounds, underdeveloped language skills, emotional disturbances, and prejudicial treatment which combined have brought early school failures and have set patterns of continued low performance.

³⁸Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. The Dropout in Wisconsin. (Madison: the Department, 1963), p. 8.

³⁹Ibid., p. 12.

The purpose of this project was to discover whether culturally deprived kindergarten children could be helped to overcome some of their educational disadvantages. The children who participated in this project followed a normal kindergarten program for half of each day. They then remained at school for lunch and another full half-day session. The latter session was designed to strengthen their specific educational weaknesses. It was hoped that this pilot project would lead to programming which would help reduce the future school dropout rate.

The state of New York has several projects in operation. Project ABLE was established during the school year 1961-1962. This project consisted of three interrelated phases:⁴⁰ (1) intensive remedial, instructional, and cultural enrichment activities for pupils; (2) an in-service sensitivity training for school personnel to acquaint them with the needs, characteristics, and potentials of culturally deprived children; and (3) expanded guidance and counseling services for both pupils and parents. The distinguishing factor of Project ABLE was a systematic, positive attempt to concentrate effort, attention, and additional resources on children who

⁴⁰Theodore Bienstock, and William C. Sayres. Project ABLE: An Appraisal. (New York: State Department of Education, 1964), p. 4.

had a special kind of educational handicap and who had been comparatively neglected by the school system.

Among the many approaches used by Project ABLE, the following were typical. Districts employed special teachers to cut down on class size. Special classes were organized to assist pupils retarded in reading, arithmetic and other academic areas. Pupils received enriched instruction either during or outside regular school hours. Special counseling was provided for pupils in small groups or on an individual basis. Newer instructional techniques such as team teaching and programmed instruction were introduced into the classroom. Pupils were taken on field trips to concerts, plays, museums, historic sites, and other places of evident interest and value.

The project was reported to have been quite effective. Most impressive was a perceptible change in the school climate and attitudes toward the culturally deprived children. They had been given an image of a school which was friendly, helpful and interested in their future. In most districts there was evidence of improved scholastic performance. In many instances the educational aspirations of pupils had been distinctly raised. Overall improvement in school attendance and classroom behavior was noticeable.

Another program that had been working well in the state of New York was the School to Employment Program,

STEP. The essential goal of the STEP program was to help pupils fifteen years of age or older who have been identified as prospective dropouts due to scholastic failure, truancy, and related behavioral and attitudinal problems, to achieve a successful adjustment to the demands of adulthood. The program was designed to provide these pupils with appropriate educational and work experiences that would enable them to succeed in full-time employment, should they decide to leave school after reaching the legally permissible age, or alternatively, motivate them to return to a regular school program leading to a high school diploma. It was assumed under this program that a combination of work experience and school study would give the students a more realistic conception of their prospects and responsibilities in the world of work, while keeping academic paths of advancement open to them as they may come to realize the importance of school education for occupational success.

There were two main parts to a typical STEP program.⁴¹ The study phase included not only regular courses of academic and vocational instruction but also special orientation sessions concerned with the world of work. These sessions dealt with such matters as techniques

⁴¹Theodore Bienstock, and William C. Sayres. Step. (New York: State Department of Education, 1964), p. 2.

of getting and holding a job, work habits and attitudes conducive to job advancement, and types of preparation needed for various occupational careers. The job phase of this program consisted of paid, school-supervised part-time work experience. Emphasis was not on the learning of a specific vocational skill, but rather on the performing of a useful task in a realistic job situation where the general demands, pressures, opportunities and problems of regular employment were experienced.

The selection of students was based on the likelihood of school dropout, as reflected in such factors as truancy, academic failure, misbehavior and manifest lack of interest in schooling.

Observations of STEP program suggested that the success of its operations depended largely on two crucial elements: the ability and competence of the teacher-coordinator, and the exposure of students to a work-experience situation which could truly serve as the equivalent of a real job.

The importance of selecting a competent person for the position of teacher-coordinator was not to be underestimated. This person performed a multitude of functions. He conducted the work orientation training, located employment opportunities for the students, followed up their progress on the job, visited parents, conferred

with classroom teachers, and coordinated the total program.

Table III explains the status of the STEP at the end of the 1962-1963 school year.⁴² Of the pupils enrolled in the program, 27 per cent had returned to the normal school program on the basis of satisfactory progress, and an additional 11 per cent were helped to full-time employment. At the end of the year most districts reported better attendance records, fewer disciplinary problems and higher grades for the STEP students.

As stated earlier in the report, lack of interest by the parents seemed to be one of the factors associated with dropouts. Certain cities--notably New York, Philadelphia, and Detroit--engaged in the Great Cities Grey Area Program have begun employing a field-work technique to ensure greater participation and cooperation of the parents in the schools' activities. The schools in this program have added to their staffs school-community coordinators who circulate throughout the neighborhood of the school, meeting continually with parents on an individual basis. These coordinators acquaint parents with the school's objectives and projects, and enlist their participation in adult education programs which are set up in conjunction with various community agencies.

⁴²Ibid., p. 21.

TABLE III

STATUS AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR OF STUDENTS
ENROLLED IN 1962-1963 STEP PROGRAM

Status	Nine upstate districts		New York City		Total	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Left Program						
Returned to normal school program	49	18.8	168	31.6	217	27.4
Accepted full-time employment	23	8.8	63	11.8	86	10.8
Removed from program	24	9.2	79	14.8	103	13.0
Dropped out of school	17	6.5	22	4.1	39	4.9
Completed year	148	56.7	200	37.7	348	43.9
Total	261	100.0	532	100.0	793	100.0

Public schools in Kansas City, Missouri, are nearing the end of a six-year controlled experiment involving thirteen and fourteen-year-old boys in the eighth grade who are potential dropouts. The aim of this project was to hold the youngsters in school by means of specially developed curriculum materials and to teach good work habits and attitudes by means of a work-experience program. The first few years of this program proved to be quite satisfactory. The boys developed good work habits and attitudes while learning certain skills at the same time.

Some studies found that more dropouts made their final decision against continuing school during the summer months than at any other period.⁴³ Idle and generally unemployed throughout the long vacation, the dropouts consolidated their growing opposition to school at a time when the community's pressures were most relaxed. For this reason, several places in Oregon extended their "preventive" activities into the summer-vacation period. With state assistance, these places instituted a summer work camp, where for two and a half months a number of potential dropouts engaged in vigorous and profitable work experience.

State, county, and school officials have united in stating that the program was a total success. Most of the youngsters, whose high-school principals thought they had lost interest in school, had renewed incentive to complete their education.

The Pasadena, California, schools have initiated Project HOPE (Higher Opportunities in Pasadena Education). This program provides special educational opportunities and additional services for boys and girls with cultural and educational handicaps. Under this project the schools have worked out a team approach to the problems of the

⁴³Daniel Schreiber and others, "School Dropouts," NEA Journal, LI (May, 1962), p. 58.

non-verbal, chronically low-achieving student. A team of three teachers at each of three grade levels--tenth, eleventh, and twelfth--both provides guidance and teaches academic subjects. The results have shown positive reaction. Some students have progressed enough to return to regular classes.

Still another approach to increased school holding power was the Roxbury Project at Boston, Massachusetts. In this particular city, a number of churches and social agencies have reduced school dropouts by providing after-school tutoring by college students who volunteered their services. It was found that the parents of low-income families became concerned about their children's education when they discovered that others were interested in their children.

The Philadelphia public school system has succeeded in decreasing the yearly senior high school student dropout rate from 17 per cent in 1956 to 12 per cent in 1962. Among other things, this program has involved smaller classes, special help for children with limited cultural backgrounds, hiring additional guidance personnel at both elementary and secondary level, half-day work experiences, and a reading clinic.

In San Francisco, California, pupils who dropped out of the regular school program transferred to San Francisco

Continuation High School. This school provided special classes in English and mathematics, in which the teachers made special effort to determine the pupil's level of scholastic achievement and proceed from there, thereby giving the pupils a feeling of accomplishment. Classes comprised of fifteen to twenty pupils, so each pupil received much individual instruction.

Schools in Colorado Springs, Colorado, have a special program for the educable mentally handicapped. This has reduced the number of withdrawals from school.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, schools have one of the lowest dropout rates--3 per cent. One of the many reasons for this low rate is its counseling program which includes conferring with the parent as well as with the potential dropout. Another reason is its upgraded plan of organization in the early elementary years. The city's "primary school" arrangement enables each child to begin his post-kindergarten education without fear of failure. Each pupil works at his own level of ability and maturity until he is ready for advancement into the fourth grade. With confidence and self-assurance, the student moves up through the intermediate grades and beyond. Hopefully, it is expected that the pupil's initial success and his satisfaction with school will create within him a desire to continue his education through high school graduation.

Since strong foundations are being laid and good instructional programs are being provided at succeeding levels, most pupils in Milwaukee never think of leaving school before completing their high school graduation.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE DROPOUTS

Throughout the United States, several programs have been set up for the students that have dropped out of school. In Oscoda, Michigan, dropouts have been given a second chance. Former students have been invited to return to school to improve their skills and better their chances of finding a job. This program was called the Personalized Curriculum Project and it was offered on a voluntary basis.

This program resembled the work-study programs. The mornings were spent studying and afternoons, working at a job. The half day of studying did not include a formal curriculum. It was chiefly individual counseling, guidance and training. Each student had different needs, so a formal curriculum was out of the question. One thing the dropouts liked about this program was the fact that they were not pressured into pursuing regular course credits.

Chicago, Illinois, has set up a school for dropouts known as the Britannica Academy. At this school there are no quarters or semesters; students may start at any time of the year, and may finish at any time. This makes it possible for talented, well-motivated students to finish

a four-year high school education in less than two years. The school was ungraded; therefore, each student started where he was, then pushed ahead as fast as he could. Slow learners took as much time as they needed; fast students saved as much time as they could.

Programmed instruction was what made this new kind of school possible. A student could start any program at any time and work through each program at the pace most suitable for him, mastering each step thoroughly before going to the next.

The Academy's students comprised of both sexes, all races, most ages, many socioeconomic backgrounds, and a wide range of talents and motivations.

There were very few requirements for dropouts entering this school. They had to be able to read at the ninth grade level, and they had to be sixteen years of age or older. The average age of the students was twenty.

The realities of the job market for the high school dropout are bleak. At the present time, and with every prospect that these relationships will continue to intensify during the remainder of the decade of the 1960's, the high school dropout can expect to earn less than the graduate, experience unemployment more often, and when

employed work in a lower-skill category.⁴⁴ Due to the impact of the great and accelerating increases in automation and technological change, the number of jobs available for high school dropouts has been rapidly declining.

The kinds of jobs school dropouts obtained were much less desirable than those held by high school graduates. Better than four out of every ten high school graduates were employed in the clerical and kindred worker category compared with about one out of every ten of the high school dropouts.

Not only can the high school dropout expect to find employment in a relatively low skill occupation and experience a high rate of unemployment, but he can also look forward to a considerably lower level of lifetime earnings. According to Table IV persons with a relatively low level of educational attainment, tended to reach their earnings peak earlier in life and at a considerably lower level than persons at the upper end of the educational attainment range.⁴⁵ A study by Herman P. Miller of the United States Bureau of the Census revealed that over a lifetime, the difference in lifetime earnings of men with

⁴⁴Herbert Bienstock. Realities of the Job Market for High School Dropout. (New York: West Point, 1963).

⁴⁵Ibid.

one to three years of high school and those of a high school graduate was better than forty-six thousand dollars, while the difference in lifetime earnings between a high school graduate and a college graduate was close to one hundred eighty thousand dollars.

TABLE IV
LIFETIME EARNINGS BY AMOUNT OF EDUCATION, MALES,
BY YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED, 1949 AND 1958

Years of School Completed	1958	1949
Elementary		
Less than eight years	\$129,764	\$ 98,222
Eight years	181,695	132,683
High School		
One to three years	211,193	152,068
Four years	257,557	185,279
College		
One to three years	315,504	209,282
Four years or more	435,242	296,377

ROLE OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The elementary teachers have always been in an enviable position as far as the dropout problem was concerned. This was because there were few or virtually no dropouts from the elementary grades. In truth, this has not been the case. In most states it has been legally impossible for a student to leave school before a certain

age, but the problems have really originated in the elementary school. It has been here that the youngsters have first found out that they are different from other youngsters. It has been here that they learn to hate school and have been encouraged to leave. Thus, although a student had physically left school from the secondary level, psychologically he had left school while he was still in the elementary grades.

Many of the characteristics of the dropouts were generally noticeable in the elementary grades. Such characteristics were low reading achievement, lack of interest in school, frequent tardiness or absenteeism, continual failure in academic subjects, and nonparticipation in extracurricular activities.

In general, the environment of the elementary school has been more favorable for treatment of symptoms of dropouts than that of the high school. There has been more ungraded instruction, more focus on the individual pupil, more time per day with one or two teachers, and more informed concern of the teacher with the pupil. Daniel Schreiber states:⁴⁶

⁴⁶Daniel Schreiber. The School Dropout. (National Educational Association: Washington, D.C., 1964), p. 196.

The elementary school teacher is generally better equipped professionally to deal with the developmental and adjustment needs of pupils than is the high school teacher. Whereas high school counselors developed in order to help students with needs that were not seen or met by high school teachers, school psychologists and counselors in the elementary schools focus on helping teachers who saw pupil needs and wanted to do more about them. Elementary school counselors work more with teachers than with pupils.

There has been no easy way to solve the dropout problem. The elementary school has two alternatives: it can refuse to recognize the existence of the problem on the grounds that few, if any, students drop out of the elementary school; or, it can recognize that the problem begins in the elementary school and then proceed to do something about it.

Some schools have programs clearly designed for dropouts. Most of these, however, are found only at the high school level. The preventive program must be started at the elementary level.

Research has fairly well established the fact that, on the average, the early school-leaver was less talented academically than his contemporaries who graduated from high school. Elementary teachers should be aware of this fact.

A number of studies showed that the most significant fact about the pupils who withdrew before they entered senior high school was that each dropout was retarded at

least one grade. Eighty-four per cent were retarded at least two grades. On the other hand, only about one per cent of those who graduated were retarded one grade, and none was retarded more than one grade.⁴⁷

Elementary teachers have often resented grade failures in their class and all but ignored them. The very fact that a child was not promoted should immediately alert the entire elementary school staff to the fact that here is a pupil who requires special help and individualized activities if he is to develop his full intellectual and social potential.

Another important fact about pupils who failed to enter senior high school appeared in the record of their participation in both the formal activities of the school and in the day-to-day informal activities of the classroom and the playground. One study on dropouts showed that more than three-fourths of these pupils did not participate in any formal school activity in their entire elementary school career.⁴⁸ More than 85 per cent were regarded as less than average in their participation in the informal life of the classroom and playground, while 60 per cent

⁴⁷Hugh A. Livingston, "Key to the Dropout Problem: The Elementary School," Elementary School Journal, LIX (February, 1959), p. 268.

⁴⁸Ibid.

were classed by their teachers as nonparticipants or isolates.

This particular study showed strong evidence of the danger of overlooking the introverted and submissive pupils who have often been passed by because they were not aggressive enough to attract the attention of teachers and classmates. The high relation between early withdrawal and aloofness from school activities indicated the danger of allowing the meek, submissive, or disinterested pupil to drift through elementary school. For many pupils, the elementary school may be the only source of a feeling of achievement and personal worth. Many pupils who have needed this type of experience most were often the least aggressive in seeking it. Merely to provide meaningful experiences without concerted effort to guide each child in finding his place in school will not result in individual involvement for these children.

One study stressed that the elementary schools should depart from the rigid, exclusive standards that have been set up.⁴⁹ The traditional practice of promotion by grades would have to be abandoned in favor of promotion by age, with groups whose social and physical development were

⁴⁹Laurice Allen Murphy, "An Elementary Solution to High-School Dropouts," School and Community (September, 1963), p. 16.

somewhat similar. The standards would be set by the teacher instead of by the school. The author of this study felt that some students seldom or never reach the standards that have been set by the school. Therefore, they become discouraged and negative-minded and their rate of growth diminishes and frequently ceases. He stated that many times these students become our dropouts in high school.

Guidance, or counseling, has become an important factor in the elementary schools. Counseling has been regarded as an essential, and there was a feeling that good counseling has reduced significantly the number of dropouts. School experiences that have consisted predominantly of failures have been identified at the elementary level. This has been done at a very early age by maintaining records that included such data as the educational attainment and occupational level of the head of the family, the number of siblings, teacher's observations of verbal ability, and estimates of personal and social maturity.

These data have been used in determining actions necessary for assisting young people toward a more propitious future. Joint effort by elementary counselors, teachers, administrators, and appropriate resource persons from the central school staff was carried out. It has dealt with the determination of the needs of individual

pupils, as well as groups of pupils, and the mobilization of the school's resources to meet those needs through the instructional and guidance functions of the school.

A good guidance program should develop a systematic plan for the identification of potential dropouts. This plan should be placed in continuing operation; occasional spurts of interest and dramatic gestures will not be adequate. Tests have proved helpful in identifying dropouts, but they should not be relied on completely. Observations and reports by teachers, counselors, school social workers, school psychologists and others in direct contact with the pupils have proved to be more effective.

In-service training activities should be provided. The purpose of such activities would be to inform teachers of the characteristics of potential dropouts, and of the problems such pupils face so that teachers will be better prepared to participate in the identification of those needing special help and assistance.

The central figure in the elementary school's effort to understand the child is the teacher. His observations, if well made, are worth more than information obtained from any other source because they depict the child as he actually behaves. If the teacher's observations are accurate, he will be able to spot incipient maladjustments before they have a chance to become chronic or serious.

Teachers who report their observations through anecdotal records are making a valuable contribution to the guidance program. The guidance program contributes additional information through the cumulative record, which can be used to check the observations teachers make.

One study listed seven ways in which the elementary teacher may play an important role in a successful guidance program.⁵⁰

1. Contribute to pupil cumulative records, assist in keeping them up to date, and utilize pupil data to obtain a thorough knowledge of every pupil as an aid in teaching, in conferring with parents, and in assisting individual pupils.

2. Within the limits of the teacher's qualifications, counsel individual pupils, or refer them to the counselor if such problems are complex or require time beyond that which the teacher has available.

3. Provide group activities which will contribute to pupil growth in areas of personal adjustment and wholesome social relationships.

4. Confer with the counselor concerning pupils who give evidence of having special problems.

⁵⁰Clifford P. Froehlich. Guidance Services in Schools. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1958), p. 264-65.

5. Demonstrate a genuine interest in each pupil as an individual by attempting to create an environment which is in harmony with the nature and needs of each pupil.

6. Utilize opportunities presented by classroom activities, co-curricular activities, clubs, and other group and individual contacts to achieve guidance objectives.

7. Work closely with the counselor in providing pupils with opportunities for success experiences or other activities which may be important to individual adjustment.

One study reviewed the dropout rates in Tucson, Arizona, for five years following the introduction of counselors into the system in 1946. For the five years prior to this date the dropout rate had been almost steady--at 20 to 22 per cent. In the five years following, the rate ranged downward from about 18 to 14 per cent. More specifically, in 1946, 34 per cent of the dropouts were listed as due to nonattendance and disinterest; by 1953 these factors were indicated for only 23 per cent of dropouts. No clear conclusion can be drawn, but some of the reduction in dropouts does seem to be related to the expansion of guidance services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The writer of this report would like to make the following recommendations for any school in its attack on the dropout problem.

1. Schools with a low dropout rate should study local trends for indication of a change. Population mobility may introduce families into the school district who hold education in low esteem. Economic or employment changes may create a community climate that is more conducive to dropping out of school. Maintaining a regular record of dropout rates will serve to warn the school in time to plan programs to meet changing needs.

2. Data descriptive of students at all grade levels should be obtained. These data should provide a base from which the deviation of populations, such as dropouts, may be observed. Such characteristics as I.Q., reading level, teachers' marks, referral for disciplinary reasons, frequency of absence, number of repeated grades, average age in grade, educational, occupational, and economic level of families, and participation in school activities should be available for every grade.

3. Comparisons of the characteristics of individuals who drop out of school with those who graduate should provide the basis for identifying other students who will be likely to leave school before graduation.

4. Follow-up of school leavers should be undertaken. This should include both dropouts and graduates.

5. Attendance and pupil accounting policies and practices should be reviewed and strengthened as necessary to insure that adequate information is maintained concerning all school leavers. All pupils who transfer out of the school district should be followed up to determine whether or not they enter school in the new community.

6. Curriculum should be studied and modified as necessary to meet the needs of all students with respect to courses offered, content, and method of presentation. Provisions should be made at the elementary level for remedial and developmental programs of instruction for those whose basic learning skills show signs of dropping below the level necessary for academic success. The students who have been identified as needing help should be given instruction by specially qualified teachers to help improve basic skills.

School policies related to repeating grades should be reviewed. Evidence has indicated that most dropouts have repeated one or more grades. It is the writer's opinion that mere repetition of course work has little value in preventing ultimate dropouts.

7. The school should make every effort to organize the program of co-curricular activities so that each

student is involved in some activity that has interest for him and in which he can be successful.

8. Services supplementing instructional programs should be available to assist students to make the fullest use of their educational opportunities. A guidance program should be made available throughout the twelve years of schooling.

9. Schools should do everything possible to improve the educational level of those who have dropped out of school. This may be done by providing programs designed for older youth and adults who wish to secure further training, either toward graduation or to enhance their opportunities for employment or advancement. In some instances, the conditions in the home or community that caused the student to drop out may change, thus motivating the dropout to return to school to complete his education.

CONCLUSION

With the ever-increasing need for more education in today's world, it is distressing to see so many of our youth depart from school unprepared for the demands society will make. One of the biggest questions youth face today is: "How much education is enough?" It is discouraging and frustrating for those who find no happiness in classwork and see no value in what they are doing to have

to remain at the same old tasks. A large number of youth cannot comprehend the relationship between more education now and greater chances for success and happiness at a later date.

It has been pointed out in this report that the problems facing young dropouts did not develop overnight. The school's concern should be to deal with these problems where they first take root--in the elementary grades or even earlier. The elementary school should direct its attention to preventive measures instead of corrective ones.

The potential dropout should be detected as early in his school career as possible. If this can be done, perhaps his futile course can be altered.

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THE DROPOUT PROBLEM AND ITS RELATIONSHIP
TO THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

by

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B. S., Kansas State University, 1959

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1966

ABSTRACT

The nature of our economic, political, and cultural life makes it increasingly important that all youth continue in school for as long a period of time as the educational program contributes significantly to the development of their abilities and talents. This is desirable for the welfare of society as well as the welfare of the individual.

Many studies have been conducted to determine the factors that influence the early school leaver. There was no single characteristic or pattern of characteristics that described all dropouts or identified all potential dropouts. However, most of the studies showed that varying combinations of a number of identifiable characteristics appeared to be related to dropping out of school.

Most researchers have agreed that the role of the elementary school in early identification of potential dropouts was very important. Several elementary schools have started programs to identify dropouts at an early age and provide them with special services.

This study showed that the dropout rate varied from state to state. California led the nation with a 87.5 per cent holding power through four years of high school.

A multiplicity of studies have been made on the assumption that the number of dropouts could be greatly

reduced if the reasons for the students withdrawing were known. The reasons given by the dropouts varied from state to state, but the most common were lack of interest and financial need.

Literature was reviewed concerning the dropout in the area of pupil mobility, grade retention, intelligence, extracurricular activities, absenteeism, parental attitude toward school attendance, and family background. Each seemed to have some bearing on students dropping out.

It was found that most dropouts had sufficient intelligence to profit from some form of high school education. Research showed that grade retention was a major factor among dropouts. Early school leavers were found to have been retarded a grade or two in reading. Low socioeconomic status with a limited sense of belonging and of personal worth often contributed to early school leaving. A steady regression in grades and attendance at the junior and senior high school level often characterized a dropout. The lack of interest in school was usually revealed by absention from extracurricular activities.

Throughout the nation, students dropped out of school at different grade levels. All the studies, however, showed a downward trend of dropouts from the eleventh to the twelfth grade.

Many of the schools throughout the United States

have begun programs to increase the holding power rate. In a number of the schools, these programs are in an experimental state, but results, so far, have been quite satisfactory.

Several schools have followed New York's School to Employment Program. Under this plan, the students, who were considered potential dropouts, were given a combination of work experience and school study.

Research showed that several programs have been set up for students who have already dropped out of school. Among these was Britannica Academy at Chicago, Illinois.

The writer found that the high school dropout can expect to earn less money than the graduate, experience unemployment more often, and when employed work in a lower-skill category. Due to automation and technological changes, there are few job opportunities available when students drop out.

Research has shown that the elementary teachers play a very important role in helping to combat the dropout problem. Many students "drop out" of school psychologically long before they leave physically. It was found that many of the characteristics of the dropouts were generally noticeable in the elementary grades. Most authors agreed that the pupils must experience success in the lower grades and thus build the confidence which is

necessary to see them through at least high school graduation.

Several schools mentioned the importance of guidance services for their youth. Many believe that good counseling can reduce the number of dropouts.

It is the writer's opinion that many of the potential dropouts can be identified in the elementary school. Therefore, preventive measures should play an increasingly larger part in dealing with the dropout problem.

